

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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ABSTRACT

Emotional Intelligence is the key to understanding the behaviour of self and every other individual. Communication Skills with application of Emotional Intelligence strengthens inter-personal relationships.

KEYWORDS: Emotional Intelligence, Communication Skills, Understanding, Self, Others, Leaders, Managers

INTRODUCTION

Emotional Intelligence in Communication Skills

The topic 'Emotional Intelligence in Communication skills' has two important faces or sides or angles. First face is represented by the "Emotional Intelligence" and the next is "Communication Skills". It has come out of amalgamation of two important features of present days as well yester year's management tool. In good old days, for recruitment of persons in management cadre, what was considered was basic intelligence (IQ), which at times were termed as common sense and communication skills. IQ was tested through a set of aptitude based questions and the second one through interview, group discussion and other tools. As such there was no tool to measure the EQ or emotional Intelligence. Rather it was believed by employers that good IQ automatically fetched good EQ. However with advent of Daneil Goleman's research work on yet another category of intelligence (EQ), the scenario of recruitment changed, and today's recruitments are done on the basis of EQ as well as IQ. Thus knowledge and understanding of EQ has become need of the hour.

Before we dwell further into this discussion, let's have a look upon the accepted definition of both EQ as well as Communication skills.

Emotional intelligence/EQ (as defined by World Book) - The ability to understand oneself and to empathise with others. Eg. The phrase "Emotional Intelligence" was coined ... to describe qualities like understanding ones feeling and the regulation of emotions in a way that enhances living. (TIME).

As per Daniel Goleman, emotional Intelligence refers to the capacity of one's own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships.

Goleman's aspects of Emotional Intelligence

- Knowing ones emotions- self-awareness and recognizing an emotion when it occurs
- Managing emotions - handling emotions in a fashion to build on self-awareness
- Motivating oneself - the ability to channel emotions in the service of a goal
- Recognizing emotions in others, or empathy -the appreciation of the differences in people and the sensitivity to other's feelings.
- Handling relationships -managing emotions in others

Communication Skills: Exchanging of ideas, opinions and emotions between two or more people is communication, which can be effectively rendered by using the four skills listening, speaking, reading and writing.

From here it can be derived that the importance of Emotional Intelligence is two-fold in today's business world.

Firstly the Leaders must understand followers, so as to get the necessary output from them.

Secondly Followers must understand leaders so as to align themselves with the thought process of the leader. For bringing forth this into the working framework, both leader as well the follower has to be good at communication skills.

This paper is an effort to understand both.

Let me narrate a true incident reflecting emotional intelligence and communication skills in a common man which is acquired very naturally.

A Housewife's Wisdom

When I was 20 years old, one of my very good friends was my grandma, a 76 years old widow, without any formal education. Her world had always been her house. I visited her, in my native village very often. I am calling her a good friend, because I shared with her my experiences of college and in return she would tell stories of bygone days, mostly connected to our family. We were such good friends, that she used to even complain about my parents to me.

In our country side, we have vendors who supply items of daily needs, like vegetables, fruits, milk, rice flakes etc, directly at our doorsteps. One day the vendor who supplied rice flakes came late, when asked the reason of his late coming, he gave some lame excuses. Instantaneously my grand ma commented that he was lying. On verification, I found that my grand ma's apprehension was right. I asked her that how did she understand that he was lying. She replied, "Know yourself, and know the world"

Later in the evening, when we two were chatting on the terrace, I asked her, what exactly she meant by "Know yourself, and know the world". She explained that, one should know how one behaves when one is lying to himself. If the self can catch the expression of self while lying, one can understand when others are lying. My next question to her, was, that means you also lie at times. She replied, "of course" Then I teased her, and the matter ended there. Apparently to me the quote "Know yourself, and know the world" appears to be mystical.

Though this quote is very colloquial in India, but I don't think people understand it, in the depth, as expressed by my Grand Ma. She must have experienced it, and only then used it. While growing up, working and connecting with various people in life I gradually understood what it means. It is our silent self, observing our active self in action, which is probably a sign of a great and enlightened personality. A question which haunts me is, from where did an uneducated housewife gather this wisdom? It is probably, the sincerity towards her mundane work, and putting herself in another man's shoes.

All the leaders, managers in today's world have to come across, such situations in day-to-days professional life. For reason unknown, your team members behave unreasonably. At times they become unpredictable. This is the time when understanding of Emotional Intelligence becomes a handy tool to find out where the actual problem lies. Once the problems are identified, necessary solution can always be sought out. Let me add here, the Old Woman referred above, was the head of an Indian joint family, with at least twenty five members living under one roof. Though there were other senior members in the family, but she was the leader of the family by virtue of her managing skill, within and outside family.

Her quick decision making ability, her impartial outlook, resource managing capability and total understanding of her work which she did made her the leader. Thus when we say, Emotional intelligence (EQ) is the ability to identify, use, understand, and manage emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathize with others, overcome challenges, and defuse conflict, what we mean is that Emotional intelligence is a complete package for above par leadership excellence.

If you have high emotional intelligence you are able to recognize your own emotional state and the emotional states of others, and engage with people in a way that draws them to you. You can use this understanding of emotions to relate better to other people, form healthier relationships, achieve greater success at work, and lead a more fulfilling life.

Going back to our topic “Emotional intelligence in Communication Skills” I would like to stress on the fact that to have an impact of emotional intelligence on your surroundings one essentially needs to be an excellent communicator. A stand alone understanding of emotional intelligence is of no use unless it is well communicated. Vice-versa a good communicator enhances his skills by having perfect understanding of emotional intelligence of self and others.

Today’s Leadership Needs Are Different. Many problems have been created when people fail to grasp a situation accurately, when their primary goal is dominance and not the utilization of resources (which include the knowledge and talent of their comrades). The ability to put one in another’s shoes means that you can process and utilize much more information about a person than someone for whom others’ emotions are a puzzle.

Above we have seen an example of the topic portrayed by a traditional and not formally educated housewife. Here is yet another story to bring out the real essence of using emotional intelligence in communication skills by an eminent scientist of the century. This article had a great impact on me when I read it long back, but today I can very well co-relate it to this topic. The story is about how a teacher should actually come down to the understanding level of a student to make him like and grasp any subject easily.

Einstein’s Story

When I was a very young man, just beginning to make my way, I was invited to dine at the home of a distinguished New York philanthropist. After dinner, our hostess led us to an enormous drawing room. Other guests were pouring in, and my eyes beheld two unnerving sights: Servants were arranging small gilt chairs in long, neat rows; and up front, leaning against the wall, were musical instruments.

Apparently I was in for an evening of chamber music.

I use the phrase “in for” because music meant nothing to me. I am almost tone deaf—only with great effort can I carry the simplest tune, and serious music was to me no more than an arrangement of noises. So I did what I always did when trapped: I sat down, and when the music started, I fixed my face in what I hoped was an expression of intelligent appreciation, closed my ears from the inside, and submerged myself in my own completely irrelevant thoughts.

After a while, becoming aware that the people around me were applauding, I concluded it was safe to unplug my ears. At once I heard a gentle but surprisingly penetrating voice on my right: “You are fond of Bach?”

I knew as much about Bach as I know about nuclear fission. But I did know one of the most famous faces in the world, with the renowned shock of untidy white hair and the ever-present pipe between the teeth. I was sitting next to Albert Einstein.

“Well,” I said uncomfortably and hesitated. I had been asked a casual question. All I had to do was be equally casual in my reply. But I could see from the look in my neighbour’s extraordinary eyes that their owner was not merely going through the perfunctory duties of elementary politeness. Regardless of what value I placed on my part in the verbal exchange, to this man his part in it mattered very much. Above all, I could feel that this was a man to whom you did not tell a lie, however small.

“I don’t know anything about Bach,” I said awkwardly. “I’ve never heard any of his music.”

A look of perplexed astonishment washed across Einstein’s mobile face.

“You have never heard Bach?”

He made it sound as though I had said I’d never taken a bath.

“It isn’t that I don’t want to like Bach,” I replied hastily. “It’s just that I’m tone deaf, or almost tone deaf, and I’ve never really heard anybody’s music.”

A look of concern came into the old man’s face. “Please,” he said abruptly. “You will come with me?”

He stood up and took my arm. I stood up. As he led me across that crowded room, I kept my embarrassed glance fixed on the carpet. A rising murmur of puzzled speculation followed us out into the hall. Einstein paid no attention to it.

Resolutely, he led me upstairs. He obviously knew the house well. On the floor above, he opened the door into a book-lined study, drew me in, and shut the door.

“Now,” he said with a small, troubled smile. “You will tell me, please, how long you have felt this way about music?”

“All my life,” I said, feeling awful. “I wish you would go back downstairs and listen, Dr. Einstein. The fact that I don’t enjoy it doesn’t matter.”

Einstein shook his head and scowled, as though I had introduced an irrelevance.

“Tell me, please,” he said. “Is there any kind of music that you do like?”

“Well,” I answered, “I like songs that have words, and the kind of music where I can follow the tune.”

He smiled and nodded, obviously pleased. “You can give me an example, perhaps?”

“Well,” I ventured, “almost anything by Bing Crosby.”

He nodded again, briskly. “Good!”

He went to a corner of the room, opened a phonograph, and started pulling out records. I watched him uneasily. At last, he beamed. “Ah!” he said.

He put the record on, and in a moment, the study was filled with the relaxed, lilting strains of Bing Crosby’s “When the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day.” Einstein beamed at me and kept time with the stem of his pipe. After three or four phrases, he stopped the phonograph.

“Now,” he said. “Will you tell me, please, what you have just heard?”

The simplest answer seemed to be to sing the lines. I did just that, trying desperately to stay in tune and keep my voice from cracking. The expression on Einstein's face was like the sunrise.

"You see!" he cried with delight when I finished. "You do have an ear!"

I mumbled something about this being one of my favourite songs, something I had heard hundreds of times so that it didn't really prove anything.

"Nonsense!" said Einstein. "It proves everything! Do you remember your first arithmetic lesson in school? Suppose, at your very first contact with numbers, your teacher had ordered you to work out a problem in, say, long division or fractions. Could you have done so?"

"No, of course not."

"Precisely!" Einstein made a triumphant wave with his pipe stem. "It would have been impossible, and you would have reacted in panic. You would have closed your mind to long division and fractions. As a result, because of that one small mistake by your teacher, it is possible your whole life you would be denied the beauty of long division and fractions."

The pipe stem went up and out in another wave.

"But on your first day, no teacher would be so foolish. He would start you with elementary things—then, when you had acquired skill with the simplest problems, he would lead you up to long division and to fractions.

"So it is with music." Einstein picked up the Bing Crosby record. "This simple, charming little song is like simple addition or subtraction. You have mastered it. Now we go on to something more complicated."

He found another record and set it going. The golden voice of John McCormack singing "The Trumpeter" filled the room. After a few lines, Einstein stopped the record.

"So!" he said. "You will sing that back to me, please?"

I did—with a good deal of self-consciousness but with, for me, a surprising degree of accuracy.

Einstein stared at me with a look on his face that I had seen only once before in my life: on the face of my father as he listened to me deliver the valedictory address at my high school graduation ceremony.

"Excellent!" Einstein remarked when I finished. "Wonderful! Now this!"

"This" turned out to be Caruso in what was to me a completely unrecognizable fragment from *Cavalleria Rusticana*, a one-act opera. Nevertheless, I managed to reproduce an approximation of the sounds the famous tenor had made. Einstein beamed his approval.

Caruso was followed by at least a dozen others. I could not shake my feeling of awe over the way this great man, into whose company I had been thrown by chance, was completely preoccupied by what we were doing, as though I were his sole concern.

We came at last to recordings of music without words, which I was instructed to reproduce by humming. When I reached for a high note, Einstein's mouth opened, and his head went back as if to help me attain what seemed unattainable. Evidently I came close enough, for he suddenly turned off the phonograph.

“Now, young man,” he said, putting his arm through mine. “We are ready for Bach!”

As we returned to our seats in the drawing room, the players were tuning up for a new selection. Einstein smiled and gave me a reassuring pat on the knee.

“Just allow yourself to listen,” he whispered. “That is all.”

It wasn’t really all, of course. Without the effort he had just poured out for a total stranger I would never have heard, as I did that night for the first time in my life, Bach’s “Sheep May Safely Graze.” I have heard it many times since. I don’t think I shall ever tire of it. Because I never listen to it alone. I am sitting beside a small, round man with a shock of untidy white hair, a dead pipe clamped between his teeth, and eyes that contain in their extraordinary warmth all the wonder of the world.

When the concert was finished, I added my genuine applause to that of the others.

Suddenly our hostess confronted us. “I’m so sorry, Dr. Einstein,” she said with an icy glare at me, “that you missed so much of the performance.”

Einstein and I came hastily to our feet. “I am sorry too,” he said. “My young friend here and I, however, were engaged in the greatest activity of which man is capable.”

She looked puzzled. “Really?” she said. “And what is that?”

Einstein smiled and put his arm across my shoulders. And he uttered ten words that—for at least one person who is in his endless debt—are his epitaph:

“Opening up yet another fragment of the frontier of beauty”

Jerome Weidman was a novelist, screenwriter, and Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright who died in 1998. He wrote the book for the musical I Can Get It for You Wholesale, which marked Barbra Streisand’s first Broadway appearance. “The Night I Met Einstein” first appeared in Reader’s Digest in November 1955 and is one of the most requested pieces from our archives. Photo credits: Adam Gault/Getty Images; E.O. Hoppe/Mansell/Time Life Pictures/Getty Images.

Thus in this story we find:

- Einstein could observe that the boy was not comfortable with the subject.
- He could also easily make out the reason of his discomfort.
- He also knew how to lead the confused person out of that situation.
- He also knew what resources to use to make the boy like the subject and be comfortable with it in future.

CONCLUSIONS

Emotional intelligence is thus understanding the self well and trying to identify and understand the situation of others, so as to make the best of every situation. This can be best done by intelligently interacting using the apt communication skills. Many problems have been created when people fail to grasp a situation accurately, when their primary goal is dominance and not the utilization of resources (which include the knowledge and talent of their comrades). The ability to

put one in another's shoes means that you can process and utilize much more information about a person than someone for whom others' emotions are a puzzle. The success lies in solving this puzzle.

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